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# EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

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Report for Riverton and District High School

Conducted in November 2017



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education and  
Child Development

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### **Review details**

*A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.*

*The purpose of the External School Review is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.*

*The framework underpinning the External School Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.*

*The overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"*

*This Report of the External School Review outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process according to the framework. It does not document every aspect of the school's processes, programs and outcomes.*

*The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged. While, not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this Report.*

*The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.*

*This External School Review was conducted by Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Eva Kannis-Torry, Review Principal.*

### School context

Riverton and District High School caters for students from Year 8 to 12. It is situated in Riverton, South Australia. The enrolment in 2017 is 137 students and has been decreasing from 181 in 2013.

The school has an ICSEA score of 973, and is classified as Category 4 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, no students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 3 children/young people in care, and 27.5% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her first tenure at the school, 2 Assistant Principals and 3 Coordinators, although this will change in 2018. There are 11 teachers and 10 School Services Officers (SSOs).

### Lines of Inquiry

In considering the data summary in the School Performance Overview (Appendix 2) and the Principal's presentation, the Review Panel explored the following Lines of Inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance. During the external review process, the panel focused on two key areas from the External School Review Framework:

- Effective Teaching:**      **To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?**  
**How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum and SACE to support and improve student learning?**
- Improvement Agenda:**      **How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?**

### To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

There are 137 students at Riverton and District High School, with two small classes of Year 8 students. Most of these students were interviewed during the External Review, and indicated their appreciation of coming to a small school, their teachers, and the opportunities provided at the school. One commented that "being in a small school means everyone knows you and looks after you". They enjoyed technical studies and the design brief approach that allows them to choose their own project within the guidelines provided. Students appreciated the opportunities to display their artwork, and enjoy maths because their teachers understand their abilities and adjust the lessons accordingly. Most were keen to have agriculture lessons.

Students in Years 9 to 12 have more individualised pathways through school, with some Year 9 students enrolled in Year 10 and SACE maths and science courses, in particular. Students work with their case-managers/home group teachers to select appropriate subjects in the SACE. Most SACE classes are hybrid, with 2 or 3 different Learning Assessment Plans and, while this can be challenging for some teachers, the classes are small and the subsequent opportunities for students appreciated.

Students talked positively about most of their teachers who they believe push them to do their best, provide valuable feedback and willingly find time to provide support. This was particularly evident in interviews with the senior students. There is evidence of outstanding practice in most curriculum areas that includes project-based learning, critical and creative thinking, students negotiating their assessment tasks and accessing multi-modal assessment and digital learning.

There are 15 teachers at Riverton and District High School, with some new, and many are required to teach subjects across a number of curriculum areas. Most teachers indicated they value the opportunities to share with local hub colleagues, particularly at Balaklava, including some collaborative moderation, while the Principal is supportive of visits to colleagues in other schools. However, there was limited evidence of any sharing of good practice across curriculum areas within the school, and limited sharing of resources. A

number of teachers across curriculum areas are eager for further professional learning to develop their skills in digital learning, including coding and robotics. A small number of teachers were yet to engage in moderation and shared professional collaboration.

Successful intervention strategies operate in the school, including QuickSmart and MultiLit, and students talked positively about their involvement in both. Students can access additional support at lunchtime, and there is an extra English lesson on Wednesdays, which the Year 9 students appreciate. The Year 9 English and maths students talked about the differentiation strategies used by their teachers, including the sharing of classes where increased time and support is provided for struggling students, while others are extended with problem-solving and group activities. There are a number of SSOs who provide in-class support for students identified with a disability, and those students identified as having alternative needs (SWANs). The school has a strong reputation in the community for its support of these students. The attendance and achievement of all these students are well-monitored by the B1 Leader and her team, and quality data was provided to the Review Panel. This team also completes and shares the Negotiated Education Plans (NEPs) and monitors the relevant modification of lesson plans and assessment tasks.

Additional funding has been found to support some senior students to access the 'Better Pathways Program' for post-school pathway planning. There are also 6 FLO students, most of whom attend a mix of on and off-campus programs and are case-managed by a range of providers. All these students are well-monitored by the school's counsellor, with some intending to complete a small number of mandated SACE units. There is also an on-campus STAR program targeting a small group of Year 9 boys, which is activity-based and focused on improving their literacy and numeracy skills.

All leaders talked about using the data available in the school as the basis for identifying students for acceleration or intervention, as well as determining the best pathways for each student through and post-school. In spite of this, it was evident that few teachers use data to inform their practice.

#### **Direction 1**

**Improve and monitor the quality of teaching by ensuring all teachers use student data to effectively differentiate and engage students, and promote opportunities for teachers to share good practice.**

#### **How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum and SACE to support and improve student learning?**

It was evident that the school does not have a whole-school continuum of learning. The Review Panel believes the school would benefit from conducting a curriculum review across Years 8 to 12 to help in future planning and aligning HR, resources, leadership and finances, particularly given the fluctuations in enrolments, and the community expectations about the delivery of agriculture at the school. However, teachers provided hard copy evidence of backwards planning, while there was also evidence of tracking of students' skills in certain curriculum areas.

Leaders and teachers told the Review Panel that it has taken time for the school to achieve any consistency across curriculum areas in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum (AC). This has been due to frequent changes in staff, competing agendas for staff meetings and Student Free Days, capacity and confidence of single-person curriculum areas and subjects, and the willingness of some teachers to get involved.

The senior Leadership Team expected all curriculum areas to have completed their documentation on DayMap, the school's Learner Management System. Staff provided hard copies of their documentation, but in some cases, this has not been put into DayMap. It was evident in interviews with the middle school students that rubrics and other documentation were not provided by all teachers, and parents and students shared that, while some documentation on DayMap was of a high quality, it was not inclusive of all curriculum areas or used by all teachers, and presentation was not consistent. Staff who are new to the school do appreciate the documentation that is available, including the programs, resources and assessment tasks.

All teachers are using A-E grades in the middle school, and there was some indication of internal and informal moderation between teachers, particularly those who share an office. Most teachers are keen for

further work on their task designs, common assessment tasks and collaborative moderation, and are looking forward to working with colleagues from Balaklava.

The school offers a broad SACE curriculum in order to retain students in the senior school. Senior leaders support students in determining their pathways and subject choices and monitor student progress. More VET, Community Studies B and Integrated Learning have been included recently to support students looking to complete their SACE, but not requiring an ATAR. Increased monitoring and support for teachers who are new to SACE, including professional development prior to commencement of the courses, is planned to ensure moderation shifts are minimised and there is an improvement in student performance in exams.

**Direction 2**

**Build cohesion in the development of a Year 8 to 12 continuum of learning that focuses on skills and consistency in digital documentation and use.**

**How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?**

The school provided large amounts of quality data to the panel. Most of this is generated by the Principal, and includes NAPLAN, PAT, A-E, wellbeing, attendance and SACE data. Staff are able to access most of this on DayMap, and all teachers agreed that discussions about data are common in staff meetings. Much of the data is also discussed in leadership meetings and strategies considered to address shifts in student performance and achievement of Site Improvement Plan (SIP) targets. Other leaders responsible for student wellbeing and intervention programs also shared quality data with the panel, but most of this data is not stored on DayMap, hence, is difficult to share. Some staff were accessing EDSAS data, but few teachers indicated any use of data to inform their teaching.

The school documentation provided by the Principal is comprehensive and high quality, and the panel appreciated the concise 2017 SIP. All school systems have policies and processes, while regular newsletters are produced by the Principal and shared with staff.

However, the inconsistencies in implementing processes and school systems were discussed in most interviews, as was the need for a more cohesive, whole-school approach to improvement. Students are looking for more consistency in the provision of feedback, application of deadlines, and expectations in regard to homework, as well as a consistent application of the Behaviour Management Policy. The expectation of home group teachers/case managers and the 'pastoral care program' could be improved. Teachers and leaders are seeking clarity in leaders' Job and Person Specifications, while there is a need for succession planning to be included in the HR and leadership context. Processes for monitoring attendance are good, but strategies to address improvement in attendance, which is a SIP priority, are yet to be produced.

Members of the Governing Council talked about a need for the school to work on a promotion strategy that focuses on the positive nature of the students and the unique opportunities available to them at the school.

**Direction 3**

**Develop a 4-year strategic plan that includes a review of current curriculum, succession planning, consistent implementation of school systems and the development of an innovative promotion strategy that recognises the individualised support, pathways and opportunities available.**

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**What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?**

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice that is contributing significantly to school improvement at Riverton and District High School.

Although the student enrolment at Riverton and District High School is small, a large number of the staff and other members of the wider community provide a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities for students. These were shared by students, staff and parents during the review, and include archaeological digs on local properties, a range of sporting competitions, camps both within the state and interstate, and Operations Flinders. Students are also encouraged to be involved in the Mark Oliphant Awards and STEM competitions.

All of those interviewed talked about the value of these opportunities to the students, while parents also talked about the trust they have in the staff who supervise the programs.

## OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Riverton and District High School provides individualised opportunities and pathways for all students and many teachers engage learners and provide challenging tasks.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Improve and monitor the quality of teaching by ensuring all teachers use student data to effectively differentiate and engage students, and promote opportunities for teachers to share good practice.
2. Build cohesion in the development of a Year 8 to 12 continuum of learning that focuses on skills and consistency in digital documentation and use.
3. Develop a 4-year strategic plan that includes a review of current curriculum, succession planning, consistent implementation of school systems and the development of an innovative promotion strategy that recognises the individualised support, pathways and opportunities available.

Based on the school's current performance, Riverton and District High School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY

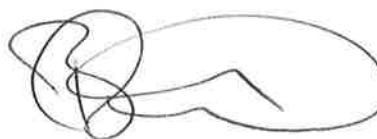


Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND  
PRESCHOOLS

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Kathy Champion  
PRINCIPAL  
RIVERTON AND DISTRICT HIGH  
SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson  
Ben Porter

## Appendix One

### Policy compliance

*The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.*

The Principal of Riverton and District High School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be working towards being compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 87.8%.

## Appendix Two

### School Performance Overview

*The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).*

#### Reading

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 52% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2017 NAPLAN Reading, 3% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, none of the 4 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017, and the 1 student from Year 7 did not remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017.

#### Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 59% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend has been downwards, from 69% in 2015 to 59% in 2017. The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Numeracy, 3 students achieved in the top two bands, and in 2017, no students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, the 1 student from Year 3 did not remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017, and neither of the 2 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017.

#### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 61% of students enrolled in February and 93% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE, did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 77% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units, and 98% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Ninety percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents little



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or no change from the historic baseline average. Eighteen percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 6 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 9% of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 38% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade respectively.

In terms of 2016 tertiary entrance, 60%, or 18 out of 30 potential students, achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

In 2016, the school had moderation adjustments of -3 and -1 in Visual Arts, -1 in Business and Enterprise, -2, -1 and +1 in Research Project, -1 in English, -1 and -2 in Maths Applications.